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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "FOOD SHOPPING NEWS." Information from the Bureau of Agricultural Economics U.S.D.A. and the Consumers' Counsel, A.A.A.

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The news for food shoppers still continues to be: Generous supplies in the markets. You can expect to see much larger quantities of oranges, grapefruit, dairy products, cabbage, pork, lard and better-grade beef. And you will probably also find more butter, milk, eggs, new potatoes, better-grade lamb, and most green vegetables. But the markets will have less of the lower-priced--or rather lower-grade beef and not so much poultry.

Speaking of poultry reminds me of the news about eggs. Egg prices dropped considerably during January because supplies of eggs were so much larger. So eggs probably will not go down in price as much as they usually do this month. As you know, egg production generally increases during January, February and March. It reaches its peak in April and prices generally go down during these first months of the year as supplies become larger. But when the price of eggs drops sharply in January, as it did this year, then the price doesn't change much during the rest of the season. If February has some very cold weather, that may slow up egg production and shipping and keep prices up.

Now for a little meat news. The predictions are: More better- grade beef and pork, and less lamb and lower-grade beef during the first half of 1939. Better-grade beef supplies will probably increase more than usual each month during the first half of the year. With a larger than usual proportion of the season's total coming to market after March. But altogether there will be less beef on the market than last year because there will be so much less lower-grade beef.

Now for the news about the vegetables on the market. You'll find more onions but fewer potatoes than a year ago. You can now buy both new and old potatoes on the market, but up until May, old potatoes will make up most of the potato supplies. The country has about a tenth less old potatoes in storage warehouses this year than last. And the first new potatoes are coming on the market in smaller supplies. That's why the prediction is: Fewer potatoes.

The onions you buy at the grocery these day's are mainly those harvested last fall and placed in storage to bridge the gap in production until the new onion crop is marketed in volume in April. There are considerably more of these late fall onions in storage than there were a year ago. Ordinarily, the price of old onions and potatoes goes up during the first third of the year. The price of new potatoes, however, goes down during this period.

Cabbage is one of our very best vegetables. And now is the time to make the most of it, because there are large supplies of both new and old cabbage on hand. New cabbage differs from old cabbage in that it has deep green leaves, and comes in fairly loose heads. It does not keep as well as old cabbage and loses its fresh-

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ness rapidly if not handled properly, but when it is fresh new cabbage has a larger supply of vitamin C than the cabbage that has been stored for months. Most of the new cabbage on the market at this season comes from Texas. Old cabbage is coming from storage warehouses in the northern states.

At this time of year a good many families use considerable canned vegetables. And many canned vegetables are very good buys at the moment -- very reasonable in price because the total supplies of canned vegetables are so much larger than last year. You'll find many more canned string **beans**, canned peas, and canned corn on the market. The reports show more canned tomatoes on hand, too.

Speaking of tomatoes, here's a little news about fresh tomatoes. In February most of them are shipped from Cuba. A few come from Florida but most Florida tomatoes are not ready to ship until March, April, and May. During these three months Florida is the major source of tomatoes. At this time of year, however, severe rainstorms often damage the Florida crop. Consequently, even though the trend in tomato prices is downward during the first half of the year, prices sometimes advance temporarily in February or March when the weather is unfavorable. Most of the tomatoes now marketed are picked when they are still green. But they are mature enough to ripen properly after arriving at their destination.

Finally, a little news about fruit. Supplies of oranges and grapefruit remain well below their 1938 level. Apple and canned fruit supplies continue less plentiful than at this time last year. Strawberry season is just getting underway, and relatively large supplies are not expected until March.

Since there's going to be less meat on the market, you may be even more interested in the Department of Agriculture's publication on **low-cost meat dishes**. You can have a copy by writing direct to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. and asking for "Meat Dishes at low Cost", Miscellaneous Publication No. 216.

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